

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. B- 4778

### 1. Name

Historic 503 - 535 South Chapel Street  
and / common

### 2. Location

street & number 503 - 535 South Chapel Street  
City, town  
state & zip code Maryland 21205 county

### 3. Classification

#### Category

☐ district  
☒ building(s)  
☐ structure  
☐ site  
☐ object

#### Ownership

☐ public  
☒ private  
☐ both

#### Public Acquisition

☐ in process  
☐ being considered  
☐ not applicable

#### Status

☒ occupied  
☐ unoccupied  
☐ work in progress

#### Accessible

☒ yes: restricted  
☐ yes: unrestricted  
☐ no

#### Present Use

☐ agriculture  
☐ commercial  
☐ educational  
☐ entertainment  
☐ government  
☐ industrial  
☐ military

☐ museum  
☐ park  
☒ private residence  
☐ religious  
☐ scientific  
☐ transportation  
☐ other:

### 4. Owner of Property

name  
street & number telephone  
city, town state & zip code

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Land Records liber  
street & number Clarence Mitchell Courthouse folio  
city, town Baltimore State Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title  
date federal state county local  
depository for survey records  
city, town state & zip code

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check One

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check One

☒ original site  
☐ moved:  
date of move: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The east side of the 500 block of S. Chapel St. is built up with three different styles of houses, each representing different periods.

The earliest, at 515-525 S. Chapel St., are a row of six two-bay-wide, two-and-a-half story brick houses with gable roofs and dormer windows typical of the first small rows of two-and-a-half story, Federal-style houses built in Baltimore in the 1820s and 1830s. This particular group is also quite typical of the ways in which the older rowhouses in Baltimore have been "improved" over the years, reflecting the different tastes of different owners. All but one has been covered with formstone and one sports metal awnings, popular in East Baltimore.

The houses are two-and-a-half stories in height, two rooms deep with a one-story brick rear kitchen addition somewhat narrower than the house. The houses are constructed in running bond, but most have been covered with formstone. The pitched gable roofs are covered with modern asphalt shingles overtop the original cedar shakes. A simple corbelled brick cornice runs across the façade. A double chimney located at the peak of the gable roof, along the outside wall of each unit, serves both the front and rear rooms. Each house also has a chimney at the rear of the kitchen addition.

The door and window openings are surmounted by flat wood lintels and the sills are wood. The window openings are filled with replacement 1/1 sash. No original doors survive and the row shows a mix of replacement door styles, all surmounted by a single light transom. The houses sit on very low basements, the entrances being reached by a single brick or concrete step.

The houses are two rooms deep, with the front room being entered directly from the front door. The front and back rooms of the first floor are separated by a wide opening, with the tightly winding, narrow stairs set in the rear room, in the space between the partition wall and the fireplace. The one-story rear addition served as the kitchen, with its own cooking fireplace. There are two bedrooms on the second floor of the main part of the house, each with a fireplace, and a third room in the dormer story.

527-535 S. Chapel St. are the next group of houses in terms of date. This row of five three-story, two-bay wide gable-roofed brick houses with simple brick corbelled cornices were built in the 1850s. Several houses retains their original brick facades, which were always painted, the rest have been covered with formstone and three have the metal awnings so popular in East Baltimore.

**Continuation sheet**

The houses are two stories in height, and each house is two small rooms deep with a one-story backbuilding. The houses are constructed in running bond and were originally painted. The pitched gable roofs are covered with modern asphalt shingles overtop the original cedar shakes. A simple corbelled brick cornice runs across the façade. A double chimney located at the peak of the gable roof, along the outside wall of each unit, serves both the front and rear rooms. Each house also has a chimney at the rear of the kitchen addition.

Door and window openings have splayed brick lintels and brick sills. All of the windows are filled with replacement 1/1 sash. The first floor window of one house has been replaced with a more stylish wide window with stained glass transom. Doorways have single-light transoms and the houses show a variety of replacement door types. The houses have no basements and each house is reached by one or two brick or concrete steps.

503-513 S. Chapel St. are a group of six originally two-story, two-bay-wide gable-roofed houses of the 1850s that have been updated by being formstoned and capped with sheet metal cornices. Some first floor windows have also been widened and topped with stained glass transoms. The group is typical of the small alley houses built in Baltimore in the 1850s, often along especially narrow secondary alley streets running perpendicularly off the main "alley" street. In many cases, alley houses such as these are still occupied by working class families and many are still covered with the formstone put on in the 1950s or 1960s.

The houses are two stories in height and each two-room deep house has a one-story brick rear kitchen addition somewhat narrower than the house. The pitch of the gable roof is especially low, a characteristic of this particular type of two-story, gable-roofed alley house. The houses are constructed in common bond, but most of the facades are now covered with formstone. The houses have simple brick corbelled cornices, but all are obscured by the sheet metal cornices. Chimneys are located at the rear end of the kitchen addition.

Door and window openings have splayed brick lintels and sills. The windows are filled with replacement 1/1 sash. No original doors survive and the row shows a mix of replacement door styles, all surmounted by a single light transom, in some cases filled with newer stained glass. The houses sit on very low basements, the entrances being reached by one or two brick or concrete steps. A flat-linteled alleyway runs between most pairs of houses.

The houses are basically two rooms deep, with the front room being entered directly from the front door. The front and back rooms of the first floor are separated by a wide opening, with the tightly winding, narrow stairs set in the rear room, in the space between the partition wall and the fireplace. The one-story rear addition served as the kitchen, with its own cooking fireplace.

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## 8. Significance

Period	Area of significance	check one & justify			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theatre	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other: specify	

Specific dates c. 1830 - 1860

Builder/Architect

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The group of houses on the east side of the 500 block of S. Chapel St. is especially significant as including three different styles of working class housing built at a time when Fells Point was already an important ship building center for the growing town of Baltimore. Early occupants included people involved in the maritime trades, small-scale craftsmen, and laborers who made their homes in the smaller scale and more affordable housing located on the small "alley" streets of Fells Point. Until about 1850 Chapel Street was known as Star Alley and its occupants were racially mixed.

515-525 S. Chapel St., represent the common form of Federal-period house built in the oldest sections of Baltimore and are important survivors of the era when Fells Point residents still made their living primarily from the sea. 503 - 513 S. Chapel St. are significant as being representative of a surviving group of extremely modest two-story, gable-roofed houses built in Fells Point in the 1850s and 1860s to serve as inexpensive housing for the influx of newly arrived immigrant families seeking work in harbor-related activities or in the first small factories being built at this time. These houses sold for about \$500 - \$600 to mainly German-American craftsman and laborers, or rented for some \$8 a month. Many such houses were held as rental property and most were located along narrow alley streets, or along even narrower courts. In terms of design, the houses are basically the descendants of earlier Federal-style working class housing built in the early decades of the century, but without the usual dormer story of such houses. Because there is no dormer story the roof slope is much less steep in these later versions of the style. 527 - 535 S. Chapel St. probably represent larger, three-story houses built for slightly more affluent residents.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

Mary Ellen Hayward and Charles Belfoure, *The Baltimore Rowhouse*  
(New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999)

## 10. Geographic Data

Acreage of nominated property

Quadrangle name

Verbal boundary description and justification

## 11. Form Prepared by

name / title Dr. Mary Ellen Hayward

Organization The Alley House Project

street & number 1306 Carrollton Ave.

city, town Baltimore

date

telephone

state & zip code Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Maryland, Article 41, section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of rights.

Return to:

DHCP/DHCD

Maryland Historical Trust

100 Community Place

Crownsville MD 21032-2023



BALTO MD

1906 City Atlas

ST.

ST.

AVE

## WORKS

L.A. Sheppard & Co  
EXCELSIOR STOVE

-AVE

## FOUNTAIN

FD

**-ST**

ST.

GERMAN AMERICAN  
CHEMICAL PAINT & VARNISH  
WORKS

SH  
DAVISES WHARR

A. BOOTH  
PACKING COMPANY



MAGNATE  
SHOP

ROBERTS B  
SYSTEM  
PACIFIC  
J. W.  
WOODFORD  
5012  
EOL  
2007 AD

WESTERN FRUIT PACKING  
SYSTEM  
PACKING  
WASTE HOUSE

**BOSTON**

CA

~~CAN~~

69

2

2120

2	1
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**WJLB**

872



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B-4778  
503-535 S. Chapel Street  
Block 1782 Lots 053-070  
Baltimore City  
Baltimore East Quad.







503-513 S Chapel

FPS

B-478

503-535 S. Chapel St.

BALTO. MD

C. Belfrage

u/gt

100

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513 S Chapel

FP8

B-4778

503-535 S. Chapel St.

BALTO. MD

C. Belfrage

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155359 0211 4 2 2 3 2





515-525 S Chapel

FP8

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503-535 S. Chapel St.

BALTO. MD

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525 S Chapel  
FPS

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503-535 S. Chapel St

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C. Belfrage

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527-535 S Chapel

FP8

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503-535 S. Chapel St.

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527 S Chapel

FP8

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503-535 S. Chapel St.

BALTO, MD

C. Belgrave

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